

Promoting Human Security

It should also be clear that electoral democracy, in itself, is not nearly enough to protect peace. Both emerging and old democracies continue to be plagued by the problem of violence. Democratic institutions everywhere are often de-legitimized and discredited as a result of their apparent inability to deliver citizen security. Human security is the other crucial dimension of the peacebuilding process.

We all understand the state's need to enforce rules, that these must be legitimate and in accordance with basic human rights, that these rules must be respected, that the state must secure a monopoly on force and that it must be able to use legitimate means of coercion. It should be obvious that without credible and efficient systems of justice, without the guarantee that anyone who abuses power, violates human rights, or arbitrary assaults, dispossesses or coerces others will receive appropriate punishment, without the secure knowledge that the state will protect its citizen, our efforts to nurture peace will amount to nothing. The power vacuum created by the conflict must be addressed quickly before it is too easily exploited by criminal elements.

"the post-conflict environment is typically characterized by uncertainty and insecurity. The proliferation of small arms, a lack of employment opportunities for ex-combatants, weakened social institutions, an a war-induced black economy in illicit goods and services, may all contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to the rise of a robust criminal sub-culture. Within this political, legal and social vacuum, criminality may replace militarized violence as the principal source of insecurity. At a very personal level of experience, this is a problem which touches a vast number of the war-affected population"¹¹

There really is no doubt that the creation of the conditions necessary to make a state viable, democratic and stable in a post conflict situation necessarily involves, as a matter of urgent priority, the construction of fair, credible and effective criminal justice institutions. That task is urgent for a number of reasons, not the least of which are: (1) the provision of public safety and of an end to impunity are two of the most pressing demands that the population generally places on the "new" state; and, (2) war-torn countries, because of the state of social and institutional disintegration in which they are found, have been rendered particularly vulnerable to violence, corruption, crime and other predatorial activities, particularly those of organized and trans-national criminal elements.

We are asked to reflect on the kind of tools that would be most useful to give effect to Canada's determination to contribute practically to various peacebuilding efforts around the world. Some models are being proposed, but in fact, existing models have been around for far too short a period of time for anyone to be in a position to properly assess their chances of success. To be sure, our accumulated experience in the area of international development, particularly in social development, offers us some guidance. But, conflict and post-conflict situations may offer challenges of a very different nature.

¹¹ BUSH, K. (1997). *Op. cit.*, p. 2.